




COMPLIMENTS OF THE

MACKINNON PEN
COMPANY.

Ward & Coy. Boston



A BRIEF HISTORY
OF THE
MACKINNON PEN,
AND ITS USES.

THE pen is as old as either the sword or the plough; and yet, while almost every implement of industry has been repeatedly improved upon, and new labor-saving inventions have rapidly succeeded each other, until physical toil in the battle for bread, in nearly every other calling, is almost a thing of the past, the poor "knights of the quill" are left to plod their weary way as their forefathers did for hundreds of generations before them. There have been few and unimportant changes made in pens since the days of Job's iron pen. The next we hear of is the gray goose quill; then the steel pen, followed by the gold pen. The first-mentioned was probably a round pointed piece of iron with which writing was done on stone.

All the rest, down to the present day, have been alike in construction, the only thing apparently sought for being durability. During the past few years, however, this subject has received considerable attention, and in reasonably rapid succession came a number of devices having for their object the saving of the time spent in dipping for ink and the banishment of that relic of barbarism—the inkstand. But in every instance the old “split nib” was thought as essential to the pen as are the dial hands to a clock. These instruments, which were called “fountain pens,” were eagerly sought after by the writing fraternity, but, owing to certain defects, which, up to the present day are found unavoidable in attaching a fountain to a split-nibbed pen, they were each in succession cast aside with the exclamation “I like the old way best.” So repeatedly had one and then another fountain pen been thrust upon the market and as repeatedly pronounced a failure that the very name of “fountain pen” had become

odious to every one who had experimented with them.

About this time, when every effort to improve the condition of the writing public had about been abandoned, Duncan MacKinnon, then residing in the town of Stratford, Canada, and doing business in a small way as a druggist, read an article in the *Scientific American* to the effect that the man who would invent an ink-writing instrument that was as convenient as a lead pencil, and of similar construction, would at once mount to fame and fortune, as it was a well-known fact that nine-tenths of this generation of scribes prefer a pencil to a pen. Mr. MacKinnon immediately acted on the suggestion, and commenced by ignoring the use of the common pen, or split nib, and going back to first principles, by experimenting with a round pointed instrument. This new departure was the only thing that saved him from the fate of his predecessors. The result of his experiments was, that in less than two years after he applied himself

to the work he produced an instrument that has since become the cherished companion of over eighty thousand of the most intelligent people of the world, and is known as the "MacKinnon Pen," or "Fluid Pencil." An article that has been found to meet every requirement of the most exacting scribe.

The advent of this Pen was hailed by the *Scientific American* in an exceedingly complimentary editorial, in which the new comer was heartily welcomed. This gave the key-note to the press throughout the country, and the name of MacKinnon was heralded far and near.

The construction of the MacKinnon Pen is exceedingly simple, and can best be described in the language of the "Franklin Institute," of Philadelphia, where the pen received a practical test for over six months, in the hands of the able professors of that institution. Their report, dated May 7, 1879, reads as follows: —

"The Committee on the Science and the Arts, constituted by the Franklin Institute

of Pennsylvania, to whom was referred for examination the "MacKinnon Fountain Pen" report: That this is one of the latest forms of pocket or desk pen for miscellaneous use. It resembles in general outline other contrivances for the same end. Its main body or handle is a hollow tube of vulcanized rubber. This tube is the ink reservoir, and is filled by an elastic syringe, which accompanies the pen.

"The point of the pen is actually a RING of iridium attached to a gold tube surrounding a delicate shaft of the same metal which protrudes through the tube in the manner of the famed Addison lead pencil of half a century since. The pressure of the writer upon the paper opens the supply aperture of the ink reservoir, which closes immediately on lifting the pen, thus preventing evaporation and other means of waste. * * * It is at once tasteful and useful, and for the service rendered is not costly."

No better references for the merits of any article could be given than the names of the gentlemen comprising the committee that made the above report.

The first pens manufactured by Mr. MacKinnon were far from being perfect,

still they were eagerly sought after and large numbers put into public use in order to give the inventor an opportunity to study its defects, which he found to be wholly in the quality of the materials employed. The cases were at that time made of metal, and complained of as being too heavy, besides being liable to corrosion by the acid in the inks. The points were of platinum which wore down after a few months' use and became quite coarse and scratchy, and the pen was laid aside as unfit for further use.

This experience was very discouraging to the indefatigable inventor. Still, one thing was proved which decided the success of the pen, and that was that the *principle of construction* was perfect. With this fact unquestionably demonstrated, the steps that led to success were few, though they had to be taken in an unexplored field.

Vulcanized rubber was finally hit upon as a substitute for the metal cases, which was found to answer the purpose admirably,

it being light in weight, a non-conductor, and a sure preventive of writer's cramp, or "scrivener's paralysis," besides being proof against the corrosive action of any ink. Nothing was now left to be done but to find a suitable material for the writing points. Here the most serious difficulty presented itself and it seemed as if the inventor would have to abandon his project. Glass was tried, but found too brittle; and many other experiments were made without any satisfactory result.

At that time the future of the "MacKinnon Pen" was anything but cheering. In fact it appeared to have no future, as there seemed to be nothing in nature that could be perforated with as fine a bore as was necessary for these pen points, and that would be durable enough to resist the friction of the paper for any length of time.

Iridium was a well known metal that had been applied to the points of gold pens for years, but aside from the objection to this metal because of its great cost (it being almost as valuable as diamond),

it was thought impossible to puncture it because of its extreme hardness. Not to be swerved from his purpose, however, a company was formed to thoroughly investigate the matter. They made known their wants in the columns of the daily papers, and finally were placed in communication with a Russian who agreed to drill iridium. After some fine machinery was procured the work was commenced; but it was found, after *six and a half hours' hard labor*, and the complete wearing down of a diamond drill which cost ten dollars, that only one grain of iridium, *enough for one pen point*, had been drilled and the hole in this was about three times the required size.

This decided the question for the time being, to the chagrin of the company, whose hope of making a permanent success of the invention was dissolved by this intelligence.

A few months later a Swiss was found who succeeded, after many experiments, in drilling two small holes of the required

size, in iridium, and who declared that in time he hoped to be able to drill as many as *six or eight holes per day*. This glad news was communicated to John Holland, the gold pen maker of Cincinnati, Ohio; who had also been experimenting, and shortly afterwards he was able to announce his complete mastery of the great problem of drilling iridium. This discovery was promptly patented by Mr. Holland, who thus became owner of one of the most valuable inventions of the present day.

We (The MacKinnon Pen Company) at once completed arrangements with Mr. Holland for the monopoly of the use of drilled iridium as applied to conical pointed pens. Thus, by hard work and dogged perseverance, coupled with our confidence in the success of the work we had in hand, we have produced and now offer for sale at a moderate price, a pen for which we claim the following advantages:—

Adaptability to this age of strife and hurry, when labor and time-saving inventions are in such great demand.

Its special convenience for the lawyer in taking testimony at court, at his office, or in fact anywhere or in any branch of his profession where speed, cleanliness and legibility are desired; the physician in his office, by the way, or in the sickroom, where pens are so difficult to find, and when found in the most cases unfit for use; for clergymen in sermon or manuscript writing, as well as for the editor, the author, or in fact all writers to whom it is important that the train of thought should be uninterrupted by dipping, spattering or blotting; for the student in taking notes of lectures, when the loss of time in dipping with the ordinary pen might prove a serious matter. For the book-keeper, the correspondent, and the business man, its advantages are many and varied.

As a ruling pen it has no equal, as its lines are invariably clean and uniform.

For ladies it has peculiar advantages over the ordinary pen, in the fact that they need never have any ink-stands liable to breaking or spilling about the house, never

need have inky fingers, never have a corroded or broken pen, or leave their letters unanswered, because their ink is dried up or their pens are bad.

In short, for ladies or gentlemen, for professionals or non-professionals, who require to write with pen or pencil, whether in the house, the office, or the study; whether on the rail or on the water; whether in the street or up in a balloon, the MACKINNON PEN is invaluable.

With one filling (which takes but a few seconds), the pen is ready for about twenty-four hours' continuous use. It writes on any kind of paper, rough or smooth, hard or soft, with as much ease as a soft lead pencil. From our knowledge of its many advantages we feel that when better known the MACKINNON PEN will be found in the hands of every writer of every nation on the globe.

Like all great and valuable inventions, the MACKINNON PEN has its share of imitators. So closely, indeed, do these imitations resemble the original, that in outward

appearance they are identically the same; but the interior construction differs in this respect: In the "MACKINNON," the valve which regulates the supply of ink at the point is operated by a weight, while the imitations are operated by a spring. It is a well-known fact that the action of a weight is more reliable and less likely to get out of order than the action of a spring. The best clocks we have to-day are run by weights.

The greatest difference between the genuine and the imitations, however, and the one which we wish to impress upon every one who peruses these pages, is in the materials used in pointing these pens. As we have already shown, the MACKINNON PEN *was the first and continues to be the ONLY pen ever made with a circle of iridium on the point.*

Having the monopoly of this valuable discovery,—valuable, because without an iridium point the years of toil that we have given to this work would be wasted, as there is no other substance known to

science that will make a pen-point of sufficient durability to make it of any permanent value,—and having by various other improvements suggested by experience, made a thoroughly operative fountain pen, we are in a fair way of being rewarded for our zeal in the good cause.

We see by some of the recent make of the imitations before referred to, that their makers have imitated us so far as their skill will permit, by pointing the needle or feeder of their pens with iridium, while they still use a soft metal on the outer tube which encircles the needle, and this they offer as an iridium-pointed pen. By the uninitiated it is believed that the needle sustains the friction of writing, and that makes the deception practiced by these parties the more dangerous, and gives their claims to an iridium point the appearance of being founded on fact; but any person who will take the trouble to examine the operation of any one of these pens will perceive that the needle recedes in the act of writing and the friction is brought on

the *end of the outer tube*. It is therefore quite apparent that the outer tube is the point of the pen, and that the so-called iridium-pointed pens, of any other make than our own, are a "delusion and a snare."

To those practiced in metals detection of the imitations is easy; and the general public have two safeguards, either or both of which should be made available in every instance before purchasing.

One is: the inventor's name (D. MACKINNON) with date of patent stamped on the barrel of every genuine Pen. The other is the testing of the point with a fine stone or file, neither of which can injure the MACKINNON, while two or three rubs across either stone or file will forever destroy the imitations.

As the value of a pen depends entirely upon the durability of its point, for our own protection and that of all intending purchasers we give special prominence to the fact that the MACKINNON PEN is the only pen ever produced having a drilled

iridium or diamond point and that any and every person offering a round-pointed fountain pen or fluid pencil that does not bear the MacKinnon stamp on the barrel, and claims for it an iridium point, is either wilfully or ignorantly deceiving the public.

Before dropping this subject we wish to announce that, as an additional protection against wear, we also tip the needle or feeder of our Pen with iridium, which leaves nothing undone that can be done to insure to every purchaser of a MACKINNON PEN a life-long companion.

To give extracts from the hundreds of letters that we have received from eminent men, expressing in the most unqualified terms the satisfaction they derive from the use of this Pen, would exhaust the patience of the reader, without accomplishing any good. We prefer to let the Pen rest solely on its merits, leaving every man to judge for himself, as he would probably do anyhow.

The MACKINNON PENS are made in two lengths: long, six inches; short, four and a

half inches. Each length is furnished with handsome gold trimmings, or tasty plain finish.

For sale only by first-class stationers, from whom every purchaser can rely on getting the genuine, with the name, "D. MACKINNON," stamped on the side of the barrel

ESTABLISHED PRICES.

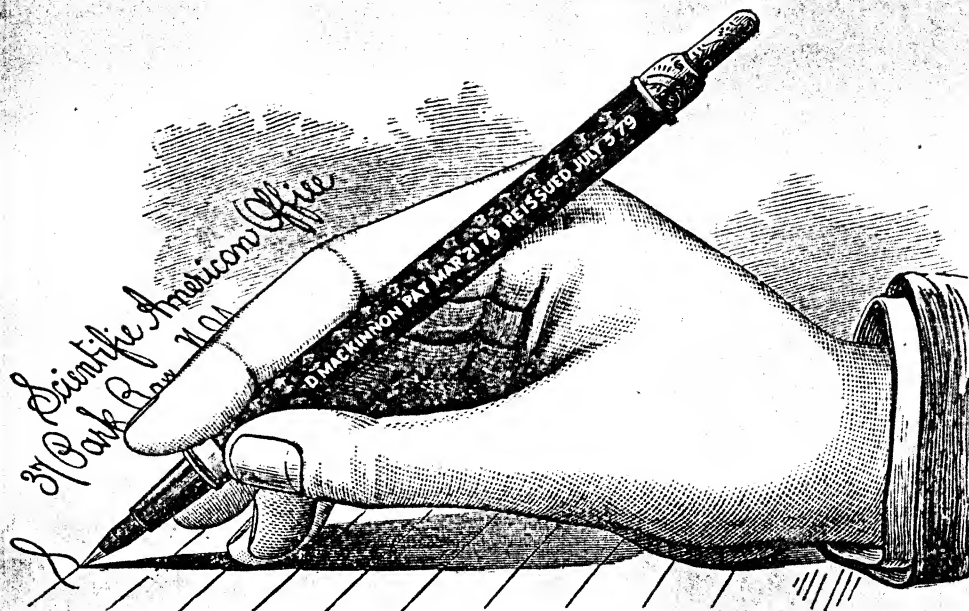
Long, chased, 18 k gold mountings, iridium points,	\$5.00
Short, chased, 18 k gold mountings, iridium points,	4.50
Long, plain,	4.50
Short, plain	4.00

No discount, under any circumstances, on less than six Pens ordered at one time.

Each Pen is put up in a handsome morocco case, and mailed postpaid to any address on receipt of price.

Pens of our first manufacture will be made over with all late improvements, at the actual cost of the improvements. In mailing Pens to us the name and address of the sender should be inside or outside the package to secure it against loss.

We refer all those desiring information concerning our patents to WM. H. BREETON, Patent Solicitor, Breeton's Building, Washington D. C.



From the "Scientific American," April 24, 1880.

THE NEW WRITING INSTRUMENT.

No one using an ordinary pen constantly, or even for any considerable portion of the time, can fail to feel the want of something better adapted to ordinary writing than steel or gold pens. The constant dipping, which not only takes time, but is fatiguing; the liability to blotting; and, in the case of steel pens, their failure soon after they get into good condition for use,—are all serious objections which existed from the first days of pens and ink until the invention of the complete little instrument shown in the above engraving. Here we show the MacKinnon fountain pen in actual use, and give a *fac simile* of the writing done with it. In general outline it resembles many of the penholders or pencils now in use. The handle is a tube which holds ordinary writing or copying ink. The writing point is conical, and terminates in a graceful tube of gold, tipped with iridium, polished smooth as glass. Through a fine aperture drilled through the iridium on the point, the ink flows at the slightest touch on any surface, and it is so constructed that as soon as the pressure of writing is removed, the ink instantly ceases to flow.

With one filling this pen is capable of writing from seventy to eighty pages of foolscap. It can never blot, and when not in use it is closed perfectly tight, so that the ink cannot thicken or dry. Any good ink may be used, and the ink reservoir is readily filled by means of a small glass filler accompanying each pen. The MacKinnon Pen is not only of the greatest service to those who write continuously, but it is a very necessary article for canvassers and others who desire to make a permanent record, and to whom it is a serious inconvenience to carry the ordinary writing materials.

This pen has several advantages over its competitors, the most important of which are: The improved valve, which is operated by a weight instead of spring, making its action more reliable and rendering it less likely to get out of order. The writing point, which is a circle of iridium—one of the hardest of substances known—perforated with a fine tapering hole, through which the ink flows in writing. The patent for perforating iridium is controlled by the MacKinnon Pen Company, and is applied exclusively to their make of pens.

These pens have been in use in the *Scientific American* office for over a year, and have given good satisfaction.

THE
OR
MACKINNON PEN

HOLDS INK FOR A WEEKS USE



THE COMMERCIAL PEN FOR THE AGE
FOR SALE BY

EDWARD P. JUDD,
BOOKS & STATIONERY
240 Chapel Street,
NEW HAVEN, CONN.